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SIPDIS

DEPT PLS PASS USAID
DEPT FOR AF/S
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER
NSC FOR JONATHAN DWORKEN AND CINDY COURVILLE
USAID FOR LAUREN LANDIS (DCHA/FFP); KAREN POE (AFR/SA); CWT
HAGELMAN (AFR/SA)
USDA FOR IRA BRANSON AND ROBIN TILSWORTH
LONDON FOR CGURNEY
NAIROBI FOR PF LAUMER
PARIS FOR NEARY
ROME FOR FODAG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: NEW NGOS STRUGGLE TO STAVE OFF FAMINE

REF: A. HARARE 2193

- [1](#)B. HARARE 2342
- [1](#)C. HARARE 2403
- [1](#)D. HARARE 2372

[1](#)1. SUMMARY: The mid-October accreditation of three additional NGOs to serve as WFP implementing partners by the Government of Zimbabwe is a welcome step but will do little to reduce the increasing levels of malnutrition in the country. Wasting among children under five was close to the upper limit for non-drought Africa, and stunting was among the highest in the world, according to a study published in September. Without a relaxation of grain import restrictions, clarification on the importation of additional biotechnology-derived corn, and an infusion of corn into the country, these additional implementing partners will be insufficient for the fight against starvation. (NOTE: This is the first in a series of regular food security and nutritional updates. END NOTE.) END SUMMARY.

New NGOs Struggle to Set Up

[1](#)2. In October, the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) accredited three more NGOs (GOAL, CONCERN, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS)) to be WFP implementing partners. With the addition of these NGOs, 49 districts out of 57 will be serviced. These new NGOs hope to be distributing food by the end of the year but face great logistical challenges. Save the Children-UK, CARE International, World Vision, and Catholic Relief Services will service most remaining districts through bilateral arrangements. The other WFP implementing partners are World Vision, Plan International, Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Help Age, Christian Care, and CARE International.

[1](#)3. Political Officer spoke with country director for CONCERN, Mike McDonnagh about the recent accreditation. CONCERN, an Irish NGO, will operate in Gokwe and Kwekwe in Midlands province and Nyanga in Manicaland province. They will feed 570,000 people with 40,000 metric tons (MT) of food over four months. McDonnagh said he hoped to begin distributing food by the end of November but was just beginning beneficiary registration and hiring local staff. CONCERN will need to purchase and install computers in the field. McDonnagh was optimistic about getting everything in place, saying GOZ representatives had been very helpful since CONCERN received accreditation.

[1](#)4. Political Officer spoke with a CRS representative, Greg Bastion, who said CRS will distribute food to 291,628 people in Chegutu, Makonde, and Kadoma districts in Mashonaland West. CRS is planning to distribute 4086 tons of food per month. Bastion said CRS was well positioned to increase capacity because it was already working in country providing supplementary and therapeutic feeding to patients in hospices. Bastion said CRS still needed at least six weeks to get everything in place for a successful food distribution. CRS was in the process of hiring staff, finding warehouses and office space, procuring vehicles, and supplying the offices. CRS was not as optimistic as CONCERN about when actual food distributions will begin but would only say that they would like them to begin before 2003.

[1](#)5. WFP public affairs officer, Luis Clemens, told us that in spite of their best efforts, CONCERN and GOAL would not be up and running by mid-November, although hopefully by the beginning of December. He also said GOAL, an Irish NGO, will feed 392,000 beneficiaries in Hurungwe in Mashonaland West province and Makoni in Manicaland province. They will distribute 27,405 MT of food aid between November 2002 and March 2003. GOAL has started fieldwork but has the same logistical issues as CONCERN.

¶6. WFP plans to increase food distributions to more than 50,000 metric tons per month between November 2002 and April 2003 and increase the beneficiary load to 5.9 million. According to the UN Relief and Recovery Unit, as of October 15, the WFP had distributed a total of 53,047 MT of food to 1.05 million people since the end of February. The addition of CONCERN, CRS, and GOAL will increase WFP capacity by 20,000 MT per month and beneficiaries by 1.25 million. COMMENT: Even if the WFP implementing partners succeed in setting up their relief distribution operations, they may not have the corn to distribute because of restrictive GOZ policies on grain trade and biotechnology-derived foods. See Reftels C and D for a discussion of these supply constraints. END COMMENT

¶7. The WFP implementing partner and district breakdowns are as follows:

--World Vision: Chiredzi, Gwanda, Matobo, Umguza, Bubi, Lupane, Chikomba, Wedza, Seke, Marondera, Goromonzi, Murehwa, Mutoko, Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe (UMP), Mudzi, Mt. Darwin
--Plan International: Mutare, Mutasa
--ORAP: Hwange, Tsholotsho, Umzingwane, Insiza
--LWF: Shurugwi
--Help Age: Nkayi
--Christian Care: Chipinge, Buhera, Kariba, Guruve, Zvimba, Mazowe, Bindura, Muzarabani, Rushinga
--CARE: Zvishavane, Chivi, Mberengwa, Mwenezi, Masvingo, Zaka, Bikita
--CONCERN: Kwekwe, Gokwe North, Gokwe South, Nyanga
--GOAL: Hurungwe, Makoni
--Catholic Relief Services: Chegutu, Kadoma, Makonde.

Nutritional Status to Worsen

¶8. In spite of the additional implementing partners, the nutritional status of the population, in particular of children, continues to worsen. A September Zimbabwe Emergency Food Security Assessment Report prepared by FEWSNET and the Zimbabwe National and SADC FANR Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) showed a worsening nutritional status when compared with previous studies. (Direct comparison between the various studies is not possible because of different sampling methods, but the VAC results affirm a deteriorating nutrition situation nationally.) Approximately 7 percent of children aged 6 to 59 months showed evidence of wasting or low weight for height measurement. Wasting reflects acute or recent nutritional deficits and at its most severe is linked to increased mortality risk. Wasting prevalences of 5 to 10 percent are usual in African populations in non-drought periods. More than 41 percent of children sampled were stunted, low height for age. Stunting reflects the cumulative effect of chronic malnutrition. Stunting prevalence ranges from 32 percent in developing countries to 43 percent in the least developed countries, according to UNICEF. Wasting was highest among children aged 6 to 11 months (9.7 percent) while stunting was highest among the 12-23 month olds (49.1 percent).

¶9. Interviews by embassy political officers during field trips to rural areas during rural council elections and the Ambassador's Midlands province trip highlight the growing concern child nutrition has become for the general population.

--Manicaland: A German physician who runs a clinic where she treats victims of violence noted that malnutrition levels among children were up compared to last year. She also said she had not seen the distended bellies but had noticed signs of wasting, kwashiorkor, redness and loss of hair, and scaling skin.

--Matebeleland: Political Officers visited St. Luke's Mission Hospital about 100 km north of the city of Bulawayo. The resident German doctor said he had witnessed a dramatic rise in the numbers of adults and children affected by malnutrition in the last two months. In the hospital ward set aside for malnutrition cases, all the toddlers suffered from wasting and several were suffering from skin lesions and kwashiorkor, and at least one had reddish hair. The doctor said he expected all of the children in the malnutrition ward to either die from HIV/AIDS, which afflicted 80-90 percent of the hospital's patients, or malnutrition (See Reftel A).

--Midlands: Chief Cyprian Malisa of Silobela in Midlands province told political officer that one child had already died in one of his areas of jurisdiction and three other children looked to be near death. (See Reftel B)

--In addition, the independent newspaper The Daily News reported on October 16 that two people in Binga had died recently of starvation, and that school children were fainting at their desks from hunger.

Comment

¶10. COMMENT: It is unlikely that WFP and its implementing partners will be able to stave off widespread malnutrition despite their best efforts. GOZ recalcitrance in admitting there would be food shortages, accrediting NGOs to help in food aid distribution, and allowing free trade of grain has made a successful response to the crisis unlikely. The

nutritional level of children in Zimbabwe has undoubtedly worsened over the last 3-4 months, since the completion of the VAC survey, and may be approaching critical levels. The VAC, as well as individual NGOs, plans to conduct regular nutritional surveys and to monitor the status of children. Per Reftel D, USAID/OFDA is also exploring possible USG support for establishing a national nutritional sentinel surveillance system for Zimbabwe. END COMMENT.
SULLIVAN